

**Interview with John Ulfelder
conducted by Sue Kovach Shuman for the
Providence District History Project Providence Perspective**

July 27, 2010

Sue: This is July 27, 2010, and I am Sue Kovach Shuman talking with John Ulfelder of McLean for the Providence District History Project at Supervisor Smyth's office. Welcome.

John: Thank you.

Sue: Now I understand that you did not grow up in this area. Can you tell me a little bit about where did you grow up and what brought you here?

John: Yes, actually I was born in Boston and I grew up in the Boston area. My father was a physician and grew up part of the time at the Maplewood Farm in the area here in McLean, Virginia. My brothers and I grew up and lived in Boston and my family lived there.

Sue: Tell me a little about Maplewood.

John: Maplewood it's interesting. I'll start a little with my family's connection. My grandparents bought Maplewood in 1925, with about 525 acres of land and they were living in Mexico City. My grandfather was a physician and he had a practice in Mexico City, a very successful one. My grandmother who had gone through nurses training at Sibley Hospital in Washington, D.C., had gone down to Mexico City after her nurses training because she had seen an ad for the need for surgical nurses and that is where she met my grandfather. That was in 1908 that she had gone there and he had gone in 1900.

They got married in 1910 and my father was born about a year and a half later in 1911 and they then had three more children all between 1910 and 1920. At one point they decided as the children got older that they wanted them to be able to transfer to schools in the United States. They were in a German school in Mexico City but you could only go so far and my grandparents decided the children

should come here for their education. They also decided they sort of need a base for living in the United States when they kids were going to school.

My grandmother had her nurses training in Sibley Hospital so she was familiar with Washington, D.C. area and she had a brother who lived in the Washington area who was actually killed in World War 1 and is buried in France but the point is that she had exposure to the Washington area. So they figured they wanted a place somewhere on the East Coast with various choices of schools for their children.

She looked around and I am never quite sure why she bought a working dairy farm. She was from Galesburg, Illinois and my grandfather was from New York City where he was born and raised and gone to school. She had not been on a farm in Galesburg so I am not quite sure what possessed her to do that but she did. As it turned out because she was not happy with the people who were managing the farm at the time she ended up spending the first two or three years after they purchased the farm spending most of the year living up here while my grandfather was in Mexico City and would come up and visit.

Sue: And this is the farm you call Maplewood.

John: Called Maplewood, yes.

Sue: And it has a long history.

John: The house was built in the early 1870's after the Civil War by a man named John Shipman and it had a style called the French Empire style. The story was that John Shipman had been a subcontractor on the construction of what was called the British Ligation up on Massachusetts Avenue, which doesn't exist anymore it has been torn down. But it was basically the same style and the story was that he stole a copy of the building plans for that which he was the subcontractor and revised them somewhat for the design and construction of the house on Maplewood. It is a very large and ornate house for the area and time for this large house.

Sue: This house was existing until 1970?

John: Yes it was razed in 1970 or it might have been 1972 I will actually have to look but it was in the early 1970's.

Sue: Any you were raised in this house?

John: Actually I visited there a set of cousins who actually grew up there because back in the late 1940's one of my Aunts remarried and the gentleman she remarried, they settled in at Maplewood to help run the farm for my grandparents.

Sue: It was a dairy farm back then.

John: It was a dairy farm until the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Federal Government came along in 1960 and basically said we need 192 acres of your land and by the way we are building a circumferential highway in Washington and some of it will go for that. We are also building an airport out to the West and we will need land for the Dulles Access road and for what was then called the McLean bypass which is Route 123 Dolly Madison Boulevard. Because they realized with the development going on in the Tyson's area the main road going North out of there was Chain Bridge Road which ran right through downtown McLean and folks were not too happy with that possibility so they designed the Route 123 Dolly Madison bypass that goes around the center of McLean and connects with Chain Bridge and the GW Parkway.

Sue: So back in 1960 when the 192 acres of land were requested from the farm is that when the farm started shrinking?

John: It was the 192 subtracted from the 532 but the worst thing that happened is that they cut it into five separate pieces. The worse thing is that when you have a dairy farm and you need pasture land you need crop land for silage and things like that. It made successful dairy farming no longer feasible with that particular farm so that doomed the farming. Although interestingly enough I am told that the Virginia Department of Transportation offered to build a culvert under the beltway on what is now considered West Park and West Gate because those were both parts of the farm. The beltway cut the farm both inside and outside the property. So they offered to build a culvert so they can drive the cows through and my uncle said I don't think that is going to work very well.

Sue: With all that traffic!

John: Right and it would have had to be a very long culvert for the cows and they would not have been too happy.

Sue: Well the house was there in 1972.

John: Right. In fact what happened in 1962 Jerry Halpin and some of his partners approached my uncle who had been operating the farm said we have a contract to buy the farm across the street, it was land owned by the Storm family and they mostly kept horses on it and we would be happy to have you join us in the possible development of these properties if you want to put in what was then the West Gate acreage. My uncle took them to meet my grandmother and Jerry Halpin tells the story of flying down to Mexico with my Uncle Rudy **Sealy** and going down to Cuernavaca where my grandmother had a house at that time and meeting her and handshaking on the deal, then they drew up the papers and consummated the deal and that was the formation of West Gate in 1962.

Sue: West Gate is?

John: West Gate is the smaller commercial real estate park that is sort of inside the beltway straddling Route 123 and just south of the Dulles Access road. So that was the beginning of West Gate. About eight or ten years later they formed West Park which took a portion of my grandmother's land outside the beltway which was totally undeveloped at that time. They bought a couple of other pieces from folks who were joining and formed the West Park Partnership and began the commercial development on the outside of the beltway. Places are now where you see the Hilton Hotel and a number of other buildings back there.

Sue: Now you are an attorney?

John: I am an attorney by training and I have been working with West Group which is sort of the umbrella group for West Gate and West Park since 1989. I worked prior to that in Washington, D.C., and when my Uncle Rudy Sealy who was married to my Aunt Martha who was one of my grandparents, four children who owned the property, he died in 1988. They were looking for another family

member to step in and work with the other partners who were non family members so I joined them in May of 1989.

Sue: Can you tell me a little bit what you remember about the house which was torn down? What was it like inside? Was it cubby holes, nooks and crannies, big wide staircase?

John: Lots and lots of that and to a small child it was somewhat intimidating. The house had gone through a number of changeovers since its original construction. My grandparents bought it with much of the furniture that came with the house, the rugs and so on. I remember the huge ornate desk that my grandfather had made for himself in Mexico and had it transported it in pieces and put together. They also had a wonderful game room, a billiard room that we kids use to hang in around a lot. The other problem was that it was very cold and drafty in the wintertime because it was very hard to heat. It had a variety of electrical problems because the wiring and systems were so old. We spent parts of some summers there and some Christmases there.

Sue: But there was no air conditioning. What was that like?

John: No there was no air conditioning but it wasn't so bad because the ceilings were very high and there were a lot of shade trees around the house and they had outside porches and a wonderful screened porch on the back.

You could walk over, they had a beautiful barn which was actually constructed a year or two before the house which was often the case as I understand in that time frame because you wanted to get to work. And they had a beautiful dairy barn that burned down in the 1960's accidentally set on fire or accidentally burned down and I won't go beyond that. There were some people who said they knew there were a bunch of kids over there that had been smoking and drinking and left a lit cigarette in the barn. Although we had actually stopped dairy farming it was filled with bales of hay because they were still haying some of the fields and the farmers who were haying were allowed to store their bales of hay there until they needed some.

Sue: Were there any animals on the farm?

John: No there had been hog house, chicken house, obviously the dairy cows, lots of pets a bull pasture and everything else.

Sue: So that was when you were a kid and where did you live when you were a child? This is the house you visited.

John: I was living right outside of Winchester, Massachusetts a suburb right outside of Boston. I was living the existing suburban life walking to elementary school like that at home and when we would come down here it was really fascinating for me. One of the wonderful things was to go into the barn and climb up and down, play in the barn and sometimes they allowed us to jump in the silo. The sweet smell of silage is still with me.

Sue: Tell me what is there today.

John: Today it has all been developed and the actual closest building at the site where the house was is the new Capitol One Headquarters and their adjacent parking structure. Actually there were some buildings there after the house was gone prior to that time and they were since knocked down. The land was sold to Capitol One and so that site is and where Capitol One's ball field is as you drive into the area is where the barn was located.

Sue: There are no markers saying?

John: They had a big equipment shed and a chicken house as I said and everything so it was a large farm and a successful working farm and it was fun for a kid.

Sue: Tell me your work with West Group. I think I looked on line and it said you did real estate development but you started out doing Civil Rights and Environmental Law?

John: Yes I started out going to Law School at the University of Pennsylvania and graduated in 1967. The summer between my second and third year I had worked as an intern with the United States Commission on Civil Rights and they offered me a job when I graduated so I came down and worked with the Commission until 1972. Then I worked a few years at the Smithsonian and then I went to work for

the Environmental Protection Agency and their Headquarters here in Washington, D.C., in 1976 and I worked there for thirteen years before I started to work with West Group. So I have the background of a Civil Rights Attorney and an Environmental Attorney and now as a partner in a commercial real estate venture.

Sue: Tell me what it was like to work for the Civil Rights Commission at that time.

John: Obviously that was an active time. I actually started working on some new projects and I wound up spending a lot of time in the Southwest working on a project for the Mexican American's in the Administration of Justice in five Southwestern states and that was the first report where the commission focused on other than African American issues. I did work on other issues as well with them. It was a very interesting time in fact Bill Taylor who had been First General Counsel was the staff Director when I was there in the 1960's. He just died recently and had stayed active in Civil Rights until his death and so I still have connections with some of the other people who were there.

It was a challenge but at the same time the feeling, I learned a lot personally and I think that I contributed a lot to the working commission on some of the issues. I helped start an Indian American project when they first got into that subject area so it has been a varied experience for me.

Sue: You are a real estate developer with West Group what exactly does that mean?

John: Well West Group was really based on its Tyson's portfolio which included my grandparents land and this additional land that Jerry Halpin and his partners have brought into the enterprise and I think that at its largest it was 300, I don't want to be inaccurate but it was well over 300 acres. Over time these opportunities came along and we would sell individual pieces for example the Gannett site that was sold to them. We formed the joint partnership with Freddie Mac back in the mid 1980's that started the construction over there. There are four buildings there and they have one other site for another building if they want to use it. The question is who are they and what is their future. So we would be opportunistic about working with a buyer and at the same time we did a lot of development with major corporations we would develop the buildings and they

would rent the site for an extended period of time. So we held onto a a fair amount of land but over time that has changed and most recently it has changed once again.

Sue: What is your involvement right now with Tyson's Development specifically?

John: Okay. I don't know if you saw, but we have just sold the remainder of our portfolio.

Sue: What does that mean?

John: That means we no longer own those buildings or properties in Tyson's Corner as of last Thursday (this interview was done on July 27, 2010).

Sue: Why was that?

John: Some of the major partners are older now and I think they felt it was time to move on and an opportunity came up with a buyer with whom they had a lot of confidence in, as someone who would work in the same vain as they have in terms of taking the long range view and seeing the future development and redevelopment of Tyson's. I mean we had already as owners since 1962 been through several stages of development and redevelopment as you can imagine. And, the Tyson's plan has been through various changes they Tyson's Comprehensive Plan. We just changed that plan again and we felt it was an opportune time with the right buyer to move on. Out it his way, after 85 years this is the first time my family, the Ulfelder family hasn't owned outright or in partnership with others land in Tyson's Corner. You caught me at a good time.

Sue: Are you nostalgic?

John: Of course and I don't think that my grandmother would have batted an eye she was a very good businesswoman. My grandfather wasn't he was an excellent physician and she apparently was a very good nurse but after they got married she assisted him some but that was by the by. She was a very good businesswoman and she learned how to run that farm and so on and I don't think she would have batted an eye at this.

Sue: Do you have a personal vision now that you don't own any of this? Do you have a personal vision of what Tyson's Corner will be 25 years down the road?

John: 25 years from now? Well it has taken us 45 years to get us to where we are now and my personal view is that it will take about half that time for Tyson's to have completely have changed again.

Sue: Into what?

John: I think it will be a major urban area and the center of commerce here for Northern Virginia and maybe for all of the Commonwealth of Virginia. You have already seen this with people choosing to locate there, major companies with the continued – the only thing that would stop it is if the decision is made to move the Federal Government to Des Moines, Iowa.

Sue: How likely is that?

John: Not likely.

Sue: Do you go to shop at Tyson's and enjoy it? Is it because you live close by?

John: I do. I live 12 minutes from my office and it has been wonderful. When we first moved out to where we are now, the house we are in now I had to drive downtown (D.C.) because I was still working at EPA and that got move progressively difficult every morning particularly because I had to be there for an 8:00 am staff meeting. So it is easy enough for me and I am knowledgeable enough to know what goes on at Tyson's as to what times of day not to drive through Tyson's Corner. My wife has her office over in Bethesda and she will come around and I will meet her over in Tyson's for dinner or for whatever we need to do.

Sue: Do you think there is a way to eliminate traffic?

John: Well I don't think you can eliminate traffic I think you can, or I think that what will happen is what happened to Arlington over time. People, or once the subway was built and development started to occur in Ballston, Clarendon, Courthouse and so on people moved there or close by there in single family

neighborhoods outside of the mainstream development because the subway was there. They chose it because it was easy for them to get on a subway to go somewhere else for work. Or, vice versa a lot of people coming to work along that strip were living somewhere else and were able to take mass transit and if you drive along that whole stretch along Fairfax and Wilson Blvd., during the middle of the day it moves and is very manageable. I think that is because of choices that people have made over time and it will take time for that to happen here.

Sue: Transportation choices.

John: Yeah, there's still going to be people who choose to drive to work and there're going to be people that live in places where the public transportation choices are not as good, for example Great Falls it's hard for people. They use to run a bus to a subway and they haven't done that in years.

Sue: Do you think that with the changes to come will also change the demographics significantly in Tyson's Corner?

John: I think we have already seen that. I think we are seeing a significant segment of international community, people from other countries and other cultures that are coming into the area and I think that as it becomes more urban we will see more of that. That is also a reflection of what is going on in the Washington, D.C, and metropolitan area in general. The society here has become much more sophisticated and much more international and much less heterogeneous and also has the opportunities for people where they can live and where they can work have become much better.

Sue: I am looking at a piece of paper dated June 22nd, that you submitted, what is this taxes?

John: Yes, I had found this it was a tax bill from Fairfax County to my grandmother for the 512 acres and the actual, I think I had figured it out here they broke it down a little bit differently. The actual real estate taxes were only \$684.49.

Sue: For all 500 acres? And the house?

John: For all 512.37 acres and I figured out that works out to about \$1.34 per acre. A lot of this land is right in the heart of Tyson's. Part of her property is actually was under what was developed up at the Tyson's 1 shopping center, the original shopping center. She owned about 20 acres of that 80 acre shopping center when Mr. Lerner sold it to the group that was buying it; he had a 99 year land lease with my grandmother and the other owners who'd formed a partnership. When he sold it the buyer wanted to own the land which I can understand and agree with and so Mr. Lerner had to negotiate with the land owners so they bought out my grandmother –

Sue: What year are you talking about there?

John: I can't remember the year let's see they built that in the early 1960's –

Sue: and a 99 year lease

John: Let's see she was still alive and died in 1969, so it must have been – I am not sure I will have to go back and check –

Sue: Okay.

John: But the point here is this is a bill from the year from 1932 so it was \$1.34 per acre, the real estate property tax and the rest of it was personal property tax and the valuation for the 512 acres at that time was \$44,160 or just over \$86 per acre. Now she paid, I believe \$52,500 back in 1925 for the 512 acres. So think about it, it is different today.

Sue: It sure is. You can't buy a room for \$44,000. Let me ask you, yes I would like to keep that thank you. Let me ask you a bit about some of the other things you were involved with outside, let's see you were Chairman of the Dranesville Comprehensive Plan Review.

John: Yes. It's what they call the Area Plan Review, let's see I have done that three times I think now and the most recent one and that is a lot of fun.

Sue: What is that?

John: Every five years the county's required to open up its Comprehensive Plan for nominations. Anybody can make a nomination, a landowner or anyone for changes in the Plan which you know is an overall guide to development and it is broken down into various areas and each Magisterial District appoints or utilizes a task force of citizens to do an initial review of those nominations and make recommendations. The staff takes those recommendations as well as their own and puts them together to go to the Planning Commission and then the Planning Commission makes its recommendations and then the Board enacts any changes that are accepted. The task forces meet, depending on the nominations, can meet anywhere from six to 20 meetings.

Sue: Per year?

John: No per round and it doesn't happen every year it happens every four or five years depending on the process. The problem is the Tyson's citizen's group met for six years but that was extraordinary and I wouldn't sign on for that but nobody thought they were when they did.

Sue: There are some other things that you are involved with the McLean Projects for the Arts and some nature things the Audubon Natural Society.

John: Yes, I was on the Board of the Audubon Natural Society Mid-Atlantic A&M as it is called. I did that for six years because that is their term. They have a headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland but they also have a facility out in Leesburg, a sanctuary. That was a lot of fun and actually I am still active and involved with them in a variety of ways.

Sue: What kind of ways? What do you do?

John: I work on the development committee and I meet periodically with Neil Fitzpatrick who is the Executive Director. We talk through some things and I help them with presentations to their current Board concerning possible shifts and changes in how they are operating.

The McLean Projects for the Arts is a local arch group in McLean; actually it is an educational group that also provides space for the exhibition of contemporary art by contemporary artists both locally and in the region.

Sue: Is it affiliated at all with the Alden Center?

John: It is not affiliated its gallery space is in the McLean Community Center. They have an arrangement with the McLean Community Center which is a county facility operated by the citizens of McLean and the McLean Project for the Arts is a local group that has its galleries and also its classroom spaces in the McLean Community Center. So, it provides the visual arts, arts part of the McLean Community Center offerings throughout the year and so on. They are also affiliated with the Corcoran School in terms that their teachers come out as part of their faculty and they teach classes and so on. It is a wonderful organization and it is highly successful and it's recognized by a lot of people as one of the best of its type of community based art, art education and contemporary art exhibition groups in the whole region.

Sue: Do you have an interest in art, are you an artist?

John: Well it's interesting my Aunt Martha Sealy was one of the founders of the McLean Project for the Arts, ah over 30 years ago and along with Gerry Brock. And they'd gone through a variety – they'd used space in somebody's old house and they'd pulled classes together and so on. Over time with a lot of energy particularly from Gerry Brock, Gerry is a woman Gerry G-e-r-r-y Brock, they became more and more successful and recognized as a strong group for local art and artists.

And it turns out there are a lot of artistic talent in McLean and in this region. A lot of people don't think that, a lot of people think Washington's just a government town, a bunch of politicians and their staffs and so on and they don't understand the extent to which Washington has a huge and very successful arts community, visual arts, writers, poets, playwrights'.

Sue: You don't think that perhaps having George Mason University right here with its cultural center.

John: That helps in Northern Virginia and in part of what Linda talked about at the meeting about the Boards hearing on Tyson's, Linda Smyth, Supervisor Smyth is hoping that with the future development, redevelopment of Tyson's that there will be major opportunity for arts organizations to have theatre productions and various things.

Sue: There's also Wolfe Trappe which is right here in our backyard.

John: Right, we also we talked at one time about part of the future rezoning in connection with Tyson's with the idea of a special high school for the Arts like we have for the sciences in Fairfax County.

Sue: How long ago was that discussed?

John: Well it's been discussed on and off as part of the, in other words it's something that will have to come a little bit later as Tyson's is more developed and after you have a larger set of residence here and so on. But, it will be like a Magnet School for people in the various arts and we talked about the best place to do it would be to put it right across the street or next to a venue for the performing arts like a theatre a large public theatre and so on. And they would have Master classes with all sorts of artists and entertainers and so on.

Sue: So that could be part of this

John: That's part of the vision, that is part of my vision for the future of Tyson's because if you are going to talk about a successful urban area in a county as large and as diverse, and as it becomes more diverse, Fairfax County and as important as it is to the Commonwealth and the entire region then you know you have to think about those things.

Sue: Tell me a little bit about your work with Great Falls Heritage and also the Northern Virginia Park Authority.

John: Well Great Falls Heritage began when, as an effort to protect what's now called the "old school house" which is next to the Grange in the Grange Park in Great Falls. And I joined it not at that time cause I wasn't quite living here then

but later and its gone somewhat dormant, although it still exists. David Olem I think is still I think the President of it right now of all the conservators.

Sue: What does this consist of?

John: Well the idea was to recognize and try to protect existing historic resources in Great Falls area and so that is what its mission is.

Sue: Okay.

John: And I've been active over time with the Great Falls Citizens Association even though my mailing address is McLean I live in the not the McLean Planning District but the Upper Potomac Planning District. And former Supervisor Lila Richards explained to me you're not in McLean you are in Great Falls. And so I joined the Great Falls Association and I served on their Executive Board, I've served as President, I've served as Secretary, I've served as Treasurer and I served for quite a while as Chair of their Land Use Committee.

Sue: Have you seen that area change a lot?

John: Yeah, not a lot but some and what I tell people that's happening in Great Falls is that you know parts of it are still what they call semi-rural but most of the change in most of Great Falls it's become more what I call a low density suburb. It used to be farm land but there's not much farm land left there. There's one family that still owns approximately 500 acres in various lots in northern Great Falls, but other than that there are not very many large lot places left in Great Falls – so it's changing.

Sue: When did you first move to this area?

John: Well I first moved, I came to the Washington area in 67 after law school and actually we lived in the Common's Apartments over here right next here in Tyson's which had been developed at that time by West Gate and were later sold by West Gate in 1999. But the - so I lived there and then my wife and I moved to the District of Columbia for a few years and then I moved back to the house where I'm in now in 1987. So I have been here for what's that 23 years, back in this area.

Sue: Now I was looking online about other things that you do. You were a facilitator with a group called the Hellinger Institute?

John: Yes, that's my wife – a man named Bert Hellinger from Germany who developed an approach to looking at people's issues and my wife and I took some training back in 2000 and 2001, and subsequent training since then. And she has a full time practice where she works with individuals primarily in doing what is called Family Constellation work. What that is, is if someone comes in with an issue or problem we look for connections in the past with their family history that may be connected to the issue and help them take a look at it and see if there is a connection and whether it can bring about some change for them.

Sue: What kind of training did you have before that?

John: Actually now my wife and I do training on that for others. I attended a workshop with my wife in New York City in 1999, and I was taken with the work. It was Bert Hellinger and one of the people who work with him who were conducting the workshop and I found it to be so effective I thought it would be something that I would be interested in pursuing. So my wife and I and another friend of ours who lived in this area signed up and we went through six, three or four day weekends over a year with someone who was doing the training at that time. He then asked us to start a training program in Washington for him to do the training and we did and we went through it with him again so I did it twice so to speak. And then we just started doing trainings and having groups on our own.

Sue: How large is a

John: It's not a certified it's not a certified program per se and a training group can be anywhere from 8 to 20 people. And you do the same thing; you have a series of weekends over a year or so.

Sue: And you work with small groups?

John: These folks, yeah you work in a group with individuals and the training is to training people on how to do that. But what you do is you may have a group from anywhere from as I say 8 to 20 or 25 people and somebody has an issue and you

work with that individual and you have folks who are in the group may be selected to represent individuals in their family or family history.

Sue: Oh I see okay what kind of an issue?

John: Oh, let's see I mean there's just everything is - I defeat myself every time I am ready to reach for something successful I do something or something happens that prevents me or I mean something as mundane as I am looking for a spouse or a man or woman or partner or whatever.

Sue: Doesn't sound mundane.

John: And you know I mean some of it is that some of it is more core you know people who are dealing with issues of life and death and things like that.

Sue: So as a facilitator perhaps your wife would work with that person and ...

John: She can work on them with individuals and she has a way to do that and we also work within the groups with individuals.

Sue: Okay.

John: So let's see what else; I was president of the McLean Orchestra for a while.

Sue: Do you play a musical instrument?

John: No I do not.

Sue: Okay.

John: I love music though and they play wonderful classical music and they use to perform regular concerts at the Langley High School Auditorium. Colonel Arnold Gabrielle who had been the conductor at the Air Force Band and Orchestra, Retired, had been the musical conductor at that time but he has not been there for some time now. That was in the 1990's and I have kind of moved on to some other kind of things.

What I try to do is to serve on several non-profit or charitable groups at a time but when I give one up I may pick another one up as I go along. For example I now serve on the WETA Board and Chair their Finance and Budget Committee and I serve on the Virginia Board of Trustees for the Nature Conservatory in Virginia and serve as their Chair Philanthropy. Those are two major Boards that I am affiliated with.

Sue: Are you a philanthropist?

John: Yes, I try to give my money away.

Sue: To these organizations?

John: Yes, to these and others. It is easy to give money away but you have to be careful about how much you are giving that is all.

Sue: I saw online that some campaign contributions.....

John: Yes, I know I use to but that money doesn't count as anything.

Sue: Ha ha that was done. That is not philanthropy is it?

John: I don't know some of the candidates might see it that way.

Sue: Perhaps. Is there anything you want to tell me that I didn't ask that you would like to be part of this project? Now that your family, you don't have family land anymore perhaps with the Tyson's Project will you become more involved in getting perhaps this cultural center or Magnet school?

John: I would be like to be and it is not quite clear. We are still working out who we are after finished the transaction.

Sue: You say we you are referring to?

John: Myself and to the other people who have been involved with this development of West Group over the years. It is still early to decide how to do that and we have made it clear to the buyer that we believe strongly in the vision

and future of Tyson's Corner we are happy to come out and participate but at the same time you want to be sensitive about the fact that it is their land.

Sue: And the buyer again was?

John: Well it is a fund. It is a real estate fund out of New York called, you are going to love this, DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners IV and they are affiliated with Credit Suites which is the major, major, major worldwide investment banking firm based in Switzerland.

Sue: We will be reading more about them okay?

John: Yes I think so and some of the senior staff are going to be working with them so there will be some continuity that way. I made it clear that I was a point in my life that I was going to retire so I have no interest.

Sue: But you haven't retired?

John: We are winding down and over the next couple of month I feel that in the next couple of months I will no longer be going to the office on a day to day basis.

Sue: Do you mind me asking your age?

John: 69, so I might make it – my birthday is in January so I might make it, no I just won't make it to 70 before I retire. I am a Capricorn, can't tell right?

Sue: You are very calm actually, perhaps this facilitating puts things in perspective.

John: Actually it does because and I'll explain why. One thing you learn is that every single family has issues in its history. There is no family that doesn't and I am not saying that everybody is nonfunctional I am just saying that everybody has issues somewhere in the past that can and do have an impact on the family and family history. The people are often dealing with some very deep issues that have a significant impact on them and you get a little more humble about your own issues and your own situation. You also get a little more open about others as a

result of working with people on some of these issues and their own backgrounds and own history.

Sue: So you would recommend everybody should sit back and perhaps.....

John: It gives you a perspective you want to understand why certain things happen. I will tell you one of the major complaints that people come with is “my parents didn’t love me, my parents mistreated me” and so on and what Bert Hellinger says is you only have one set of parents, biological that is the way it is and the best thing that you can do is thank your parents. That doesn’t mean that you have to accept everything that has happened or what they did or didn’t do but frankly you wouldn’t be here if you didn’t have those two people or if they hadn’t gotten together.

Sue: And your relationship with your parents?

John: Well my parents are dead now but it certainly helped improve my perspective of my relationship with my parents.

Sue: Any you have a long history of family in this area of McLean?

John: Yes, my parents, grandparents, great grandparents. Actually I have been doing a lot of work on genealogy with my family and one of the things I expect to do when I am no longer going to the office and I am retired is to be spending more time on that. My wife has been doing the same with her family and has found a lot of very interesting and surprising things out about her own family history and I have found a whole segment of family of second cousins in California who are descendants from my grandfather. There are brothers who split from New York in the 1880’s and went to San Francisco and then there was no more contact between the rest of them.

Sue: So the original Ulfelders came from Germany do you know where?

John: Germany. Yes they came from around Nuremburg and Bavaria. It was the Kingdom of Bavaria when they left because there was no Germany until the nineteenth century.

Sue: Sounds like a project that

John: I have a lot of work to do, yes, we've even gone back and found the Village of Ulfeld which is outside of Furth which is outside of Nuremburg and as you may or may not know in Germany the people often took names related to where they were from as well so we are trying to figure out that connection.

Sue: Good luck. Thank you.